

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 05562 210418Z
ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: PINT, NP
SUBJECT: NEPAL CELEBRATES CONSTITUTION DAY

1. NEPAL CELEBRATED CONSTITUTION DAY, ALTERNATELY AND
EQUALLY BILLED AS MEMORIAL DAY TO LATE KING MAHENDRA,
WITH NATIONAL HOLIDAY DECEMBER 16. SINCE IT WAS LATE
KING WHO PROMULGATED PRESENT CONSTITUTION IN 1962 THERE
WAS LOGICAL CONNECTION IN THIS DUAL FOCUS. THERE WERE
ELABORATE TRIBUTES AND CEREMONIES TO THE LATE KING, BUT
KEY FEATURE WAS STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF PANCHAYAT SYSTEM
AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER CONSTITUTION OVER PAST 15 YEARS.

2. KING BIRENDRA, IN MAJOR ADDRESS TO PUBLIC GATHERING
IN KATHMANDU ON THIS OCCASION, HIGHLIGHTED THREE TENETS
OF SYSTEM-CLASS COORDINATION, DECENTRALIZATION AND
DEMOCRACY WITHOUT RESORT TO PARTIES--AS BEING
DESIGNED TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT NEPALESE IDENTITY.
KING PUT GREATEST EMPHASIS ON LAST OF THESE THREE TENETS,
NOTING FIRST THAT "PARTYLESSNESS" IS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE.
IN TERMS OF GEO-POLITICAL SITUATION, SEGMENTED NATURE
OF SOCIETY AND, ABOVE ALL, TO AVOID WEAKENING OF NATIONAL
UNITY, KING DECLARED THERE COULD BE NO REVERSION TO
PARTIES "AT THIS STAGE OF OUR POLITICAL GROWTH".

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AT SAME TIME KING STRESSED COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY,
THE REQUIREMENT THAT SYSTEM BE RESPONSIVE TO PUBLIC
WILL. BUT KING STATED THIS WOULD BE "DEMOCRACY OF
NEPALESE INNOVATION", "NOT MIMICRY OF ALIEN MODELS."
KING ARGUED THAT PARTYLESS SYSTEM ALLOWS PEOPLE'S
REPRESENTATIVES FREELY TO VOICE VIEWS RATHER THAN BE

CONSTRAINED BY PARTY DICTATES. KING REJECTED AUTHORITARIANISM AS BEING BASED ON FEAR AND COERCION RATHER THAN POPULAR WILL AND SUPPORT AND NOTED THAT IF DEMOCRACY BRINGS STABILITY, AUTHORITARIAN SYSTEM BUYS SHORT TERM CONTROL AT COST OF PERMANENCE. KING CONCLUDED BY NOTING SUCCESSFUL CREATION UNDER PANCHAYAT SYSTEM OF "INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT" OF COUNTRY AND SAID ISSUE WAS NOT ONE OF WHETHER SYSTEM WILL CONTINUE, BUT RATHER "TO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR GREATER PERSEVERENCE, SINCERITY AND INTEGRITY TO MOVE TO THE GOAL OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT."

COMMENT: KING'S ADDRESS APPEARS BE MIXTURE OF FIRMNESS AND FLEXIBILITY. HE WAS UNEQUIVOCAL IN REJECTING RETURN TO PARTIES OR ADOPTION OF WESTERN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. ON OTHER HAND, ENDORSEMENT OF DEMOCRACY, NEPALESE STYLE, AND ATTACK ON AUTHORITARIAN RULE APPEAR TO BE DESIGNED AS RESPONSE TO CRITICISM ON SYSTEM, BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN. KING'S CLOSING CALL FOR AN END TO DEBATE ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND MORE ATTENTION TO DEVELOPMENT--LESS TALK AND MORE WORK--FURTHER REFLECTS HIS MAJESTY'S IMPATIENCE WITH POLITICIANS IN GENERAL.

HECK

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